



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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April 17, 2001
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Bloechle, Carey, Curry, Fox, Grone, Jelinek, Kolb (by phone), Lloyd, Nolan Brown,
Ortmeier, Rasmussen, Shepard, Sorensen
Absent: Berger, Breckner, Davis, Gieschen, Hodges, Holcomb

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Approval of Agenda

The following was added under IX. New Business: D. SRC List Serv, E. Consumer Brochure Input, F. Criminal Background Checks. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Nolan Brown and seconded by Carey. Motion passed.

III. Approval of Minutes from February 13, 2001

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Fox and seconded by Grone. Motion passed.

IV. Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) Report – Mark Schultz

ATP has started developing Fact Sheets which provide specific information about the programs they work with (i.e., Part B, HomeChoice, Making Homes Accessible (MHA), etc.). Mark will provide copies of the fact sheets to Cathy to send out to council members.

Mark distributed a handout explaining the Resource Centers ATP will be involved with. At the comprehensive centers, ATP will have assistive technology such as computers, voice recognition software, talking equipment, visual displays, voice output feedback, ergonomic workstations, and other software focusing on writing and comprehensive skills available at the One Stop resource centers. Other technology will also be integrating into work stations through the centers. Training will be provided for staff at the one stops.

ATP has been working with the Nebraska Information Technology Commission to make changes to the language in all purchasing contracts that would require all purchases to be accessible.

ATP is developing a new newsletter, Technology Matters: Room for Change which will focus on housing issues. They will continue to send out Technology Works, the newsletter focusing on employment, and Bright Ideas, the newsletter that focuses on technology itself.

ATP is participating in the State Fair again this year. They have reserved the booth next to the Department of Labor which will include accessible workstations, hardware/software, etc. They will also be an official sponsor of the fair and participate with the Elks and VR in having one of the Solutions On Site (SOS) vans located outside near the entrance. The van will have adaptable equipment available for people to view.

On June 11, ATP will be sponsoring a technology expo in North Platte during NebraskLand Days. This expo will not be as big as the one previously held in Lincoln, but will attempt to get more information out to the rural parts of the state. Approximately 30 vendors will be available at the expo, which will be held at the Quality Inn. ATP will send more information out to council members when it is available.

ATP is looking at technology for people with developmental disabilities. Members of the ATP staff will be doing a presentation at the Sharing Our Best conference which describes how technology can be used given certain types of needs.

V. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

1) Mental Health Subcommittee on Employment – VR has been working with the Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Council to create a steering committee which would focus on the issue of employment for persons with mental illness. The steering committee has been appointed and will consist of approximately 28 people, including representatives from VR, HHS, the Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Council, NAMI, the Mental Health Association, NE Advocacy Services, and the VR mental health cooperative agreement partners, as well as the Project Director of Public Policy at UNL, employers, and consumers. Meetings will be conducted by a facilitator. An introductory letter has been done, and will be distributed to participants with an agenda.

The steering committee will meet three times, with the first meeting scheduled for May 11. At the first meeting, the committee will identify problems and issues currently facing individuals with mental illness who want to become employed. The second and third meetings will be used to identify solutions to the problems, and what people see for employment of people with mental illness in the future. Recommendations from the steering committee will be reported to the Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Council.

2) Rule 72 – Information pertaining to the changes in Rule 72 are being implemented in QUEST (VR's new data system). The data entry screens are currently being developed. The most significant change relates to using the grant model for post secondary education. During the first year, a check for \$300.00 will be made to the client which could be used for books and the balance paid to the college for tuition and fees. Every year after, the entire grant will be paid directly to the client. In preparation for this change, some offices have developed an orientation for those clients going to college to explain how the grant model will work. This model gives more responsibility to the client and supports informed choice.

3) Workforce Development – VR has developed Memorandum's of Understanding (MOU's) with each workforce development area indicating our intent to participate. The MOU's do not define services or costs. Now VR will negotiate with each one stop attachments to the MOU's. Attachment A will identify the services that will be provided, and Attachment B will identify the costs.

VR will have itinerant space in the following locations: Beatrice (May 1); Norfolk (August 1); Omaha (date unknown); Grand Island (June 1); and Columbus. VR is currently working with HHS and Dep't of Labor to lease enough space to house the entire Kearney office as well as HHS and the one stop.

VI. WIA Update (*Mel Bargas*)

Mel was unable to attend the meeting. Frank Lloyd presented WIA information in his absence.

VII. Old Business

A. IPE Committee Focus Group Update (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

Two focus groups have been scheduled to get input on changes for the IPE. The first will be May 14 in Grand Island with ARC, and the second on May 15 in Omaha with the Manic Depressive support group. The focus groups will not last longer than an hour. Vicki will be working with VR to develop the appropriate questions. The focus groups will also be providing input on the new VR consumer brochure.

B. Legislative Committee ADA Letter (*Tim Kolb*)

Kolb apologized for not having the letter done due to hospitalization. The Legislative Committee will discuss at their meeting today what to do about the letter, what the content should be, etc and report back after the meeting.

C. Role of Interagency Outreach Committee (*Sharon Bloechle*)

The committee indicated at the last meeting that they needed direction from the council in terms of additional responsibilities. The Executive Committee feels the annual report could use revising and would like this committee to review past reports, as well as reports from other states, and come up with a new plan for the SRC annual report. The committee could also review the current web site and web sites from other state councils, and provide feedback. Bloechle asked the committee to discuss this proposed goal at their committee meeting and report back to the council.

Shepard (chair of Interagency Outreach Committee) indicated that at the last council meeting the committee identified referrals as an area they would be looking into, in terms of where the referrals are coming from, which ones are resulting in successful outcomes, and the referral process. With this identified, they may not have the time to devote to also reviewing the annual report. The committee will discuss during their meeting and prioritize.

VIII. Reports

A. Committee Reports

Client Service Delivery – (*Ortmeier reporting*)

The committee reviewed the proposed survey being developed to gather input from consumers about the VR process. The survey has been divided into stages based on how far along in the process the consumer has gone. The questions for those consumers who have completed orientation has been completed and the committee will be sending it out to be used as a test project in some of the offices.

Interagency Outreach Committee – (*Shepard reporting*)

The committee continues to invite representatives from other agencies to present information at council meetings. They would like to continue looking at the data in terms of referrals from other agencies by source, and at the relationship between the referral sources and VR to be sure they are providing correct information about VR.

Since the committee will be focusing on referrals, others interested in working on revising the annual report should let Sharon or Cathy know.

Legislative Committee – (*Kolb reporting*)

The committee discussed how to develop a letter indicating the council's support of the ADA without doing lobbying.

B. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

The CAP report was distributed prior to the meeting for the council to review. Council members commented that they liked having it in written format. There were no questions.

The next JAM is scheduled for May 17 in Omaha. The flyer for the JAM will be available at the VR website (www.vocreahb.state.ne.us)

C. SILC Repot (*Tim Kolb*)

The SILC is applying to become a 501C3. They have developed a proposed budget in their new 3 year state plan. Any money needed above and beyond what is available from VR/SVI will be obtained through grants. Kolb will submit a copy of the 3 year state plan to SRC members when it is finished.

IX. New Business

A. State Plan and Policy Issues (*Don Crouch*)

1. Vouchers for Self Employment – VR is piloting the voucher system with educational grants for consumers in post-secondary. The second area VR is proposing to use vouchers in is self-employment. For example, instead of purchasing tools for a business, VR would give the money to the clients to do their own purchasing. VR is currently in the process the trying this option with a few clients going into self-employment. This will put more responsibility on the client. The benefit of this with self employment is that an individual can often transact a better deal than the state is able to get.

2. Workers Comp – Years ago there was a written agreement which identified how the workers comp court and VR would work together. There has not been an agreement during the last several years because the workers comp court had strict regulations which required the individual to try and get the same job they had before, or prove it wasn't possible, before they could try any other options. VR didn't agree that this philosophy fit with consumer choice, so discontinued working with them. Now, VR is considering working with them again, and would like input from the council.

VR does not get reimbursed for the costs, but when a plan is developed, the court pays for the costs of the plan, including counselor time. Rasmussen inquired what has changed for VR to want to be involved in worker's comp cases again. Crouch indicated that in the past, the order of selection did not allow VR to serve everyone, so the court wasn't interested in an agreement where everybody couldn't be served. Now, with transition, employment, and employment warranty, VR's philosophy is more like that of worker's comp.

3. Update to State Plan (*Dennis Dunn*) - A handout distributed identified the changes to the state plan. Most of the revisions are updates to reflect current numbers and current projections. VR will be evaluating and reporting progress in terms of achieving the goals in the current state plan. Information will continued to be shared with the council at each meeting. Also included in the update will be any input and recommendations made by the council during the past year.

4. Revisions to IPE – Dennis Dunn described the process being used to help consumers develop their own goals and service needs. The process uses a form to record goals and objectives. The first part of the form will be the individuals plan for employment, including their goal. Following the goal would be the steps that need to take place before they can be successful in that goal. This would be completed by the client in their own words. Then, for each step listed, they would identify any concerns, who is going to help, who will pay, etc. VR feels these revisions will help the IPE make more sense for consumers and allow them to be involved in the process of developing the IPE.

B. Rule 72 (*Don Crouch*)

VR has been providing the council with information about the changes in Rule 72 at the last few meetings. The new rule has been distributed to staff with directions for how to implement the changes. CAP has received some feedback since the information has been distributed, but most of the comments are misunderstandings by clients or staff. None of the SRC members reported hearing any comments regarding the changes.

Ortmeier inquired as to whether consumers have been informed of the changes. VR indicated that some have been, and that some offices are doing workshops, developing materials, or writing letters to clients to let them know. A letter at the state level will be sent to schools.

C. Joint Agency Meeting (JAM) Representative (*Sharon Bloechle*)

Bloechle will be serving as the SRC representative at the JAM meeting in Omaha on May 17. Shepard will be the backup if Bloechle is unable to attend.

D. SRC List Serv (*Sharon Bloechle*)

There is an SRC list serv available. Bloechle will send the address to all SRC members to join if they want.

E. Consumer Brochure Input (*Cathy Callaway*)

Anne Sumner, Public Information Specialist with VR, is designing a consumer brochure and asked for input from the council. The brochure was distributed along with a sheet for providing input. Council members can submit comments to Anne or Cathy.

F. Criminal Background Checks (*Frank Lloyd*)

VR is considering background checks at three levels - consumers, staff, and/or providers (who work with consumers). VR recently had a situation where a consumer, with a child molestation conviction, was working for a contractor in janitorial services. The contractor didn't do a background check and had the person working at an elementary school.

The background checks would cost money, but VR wants to do what makes sense for consumers. VR will be discussing this issue, and bring whatever is developed back to the council for their input. Some of the problems would be in identifying which crimes would preclude a person from being able to work in the system, or that a background check in NE would not provide information about convictions in other states.

X. Presentation – *Carla Sorensen*

Community- Based Developmental Disabilities Services were created by the state of Nebraska in the 1960's to serve people in their home communities. The services are not federally mandated, although the state does receive federal money to match state dollars to purchase services for people receiving services under the Home and Community-Based Waivers. Prior to the creation of community-based services there were only institutional services.

The DD system consists of the Beatrice State Developmental Center, service coordinators in 34 towns, an administrative office, and 39 contractors statewide providing services. There are currently more than 3500 people in services right now who receive residential and/or day services. Until 1991, the system served only people with mental retardation (defined as 70 below IQ) and accompanying adaptive behavior deficits. With the passage of the Developmental Disabilities Services Act (DDSA) in 1991, eligibility was expanded to people with other developmental disabilities, besides mental retardation. Developmental Disability is defined as: a severe, chronic disability other than mental retardation or mental illness which is

attributable to a mental or physical impairment other than a mental or physical impairment caused solely by mental illness, is manifested before the age of twenty-two, is likely to continue indefinitely, and results in at least one developmental delay (for people under age 3) or, in substantial functional limitations in three or more areas of major life activity (for people age three or older.) Eligibility under the broader DD criteria is determined using a standardized tool statewide.

There are two entitlements - service coordination and day services for graduates. If a person is eligible for DD services, he or she can get service coordination on demand at any age. Students can be funded for day services at the age of 21 upon graduation. The DDSA allows persons graduating on or after September 6, 1993 to be funded for day services at graduation. Some students may desire residential funding at the time of graduation. At this time there is no entitlement to such funding, so the person's request is noted on the statewide data registry.

The DD system takes referrals for people at any age and enters requests for services on the statewide registry. There are currently people who have requested services as far into the future as the year 2020. An objective assessment process is used to determine the amount of funding to be authorized for each person. The amount is based upon individual need with regard to adaptive behaviors, medical and behavioral risk, etc.

When a student is transitioning from school, every effort is made to ensure that a services coordinator can attend a planning IEP, when requested. A service coordinator may not be specifically assigned to the person, but may attend to provide information about available adult services, the objective assessment process, etc. Staff resources are not sufficient to allow service coordinators to attend all IEPs of each student.

Currently, the DD system is under a prioritization process outlined in statute. The prioritization process requires that funding must first be allocated to individuals needing food, shelter, clothing, medical care, protection from abuse/neglect and protection from harm.. Before DD funding can be authorized all other sources of funding, services, and supports must be exhausted.

Legislative initiatives in process include the allocation of additional funding to serve people waiting for services, as well as funding for provider rate increases to enhance direct care staff salaries and provider rate equity.

For more information about the DD system, council members may contact Carla.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Nolan Brown and seconded by Curry. Motion passed.